DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 469 882 JC 020 715

AUTHOR	Jacobsen, Michele; Tate, Joanne
TITLE	Hockey Night in Canada and Waltzing Matilda: Examining Culture in a Global Classroom.
PUB DATE	2001-04-00
NOTE	12p.; Paper contributed to the Teaching in the Community College Online Conference, "The Internet & Learning: What Have We Discovered and Where Are We Headed?" (6th, Kapiolani Community College, April 17-19, 2001).
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/ tcon01/.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Colleges; *Curriculum Development; Foreign Countries; Multicultural Education; Partnerships in Education; Program Implementation; Two Year Colleges; World Wide Web
IDENTIFIERS	*University of Calgary (Canada)

ABSTRACT

This paper, the result of a collaboration between professors at the University of Calgary in Canada and Ararat Community College in Victoria (Australia), was presented at the 2001 Teaching the in Community Colleges Conference, "Teaching and Learning: What Have We Discovered and Where Are We Headed?" In this paper, the authors describe their experiences in setting up a collaborative course to examine Canadian and Australian cultures in a global classroom and offer tips and instructions for setting up global educational communities, including advice about managing time zones, setting up video-conferencing and email technologies, and planning a cooperative agenda. Links to World Wide Web sites are included in the paper to serve as examples and inspiration for future global classroom instructors. The authors illustrate how collaborative projects can be used to investigate social issues, multicultural connections, similarities and differences between cultures, and how information and communications technology can connect students around the world in meaningful and engaging projects with shared goals. Finally, the authors discuss the benefits of a global classroom, citing high levels of student interest, satisfaction, and learning about culture, technology, and distance collaboration. (CB)

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Hockey Night in Canada and Waltzing Matilda: Examining Culture in a Global Classroom

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Hockey Night in Canada and Waltzing Matilda: Examining Culture in a Global Classroom

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How do teachers from two distant sides of the world manage to arrange an on-line project to involve their students in an international cultural exchange? Joanne and I originally met at an educational technology conference in Freiberg, Germany in June 1998. By sheer coincidence, we serendipitously met up again at an educational computing conference in Melbourne, Australia, in July 2000. Because of our many shared interests and ideas about integrating technology for teaching and learning, and comparing what was unique and similar about our two countries, we decided to pursue an international project together by linking our students through technology and videoconferencing. Joanne's students are year 7 and year 12 students at Ararat Community College in Ararat, Victoria, Australia. Michele's students are undergraduate education students who are preparing to teach in kindergarten to grade 12 classrooms. We planned and arranged two Global Classroom projects, A Mystery Culture Box Exchange and a Family Treasures project, and even co-authored this article, via e-mail and the World Wide Web.

The Mystery Culture Box Exchange involved undergraduate Canadian and year 11 Australian students in identifying and selecting artifacts, national currency and local items to represent their country's unique culture and identity in some way. The students in both classrooms bundled their artifacts together in a "Mystery Culture Box" that they sent to their counterparts across the Pacific Ocean. Late in October 2000, the Canucks and the Aussies met in real time via video-teleconference to open the Mystery Culture Boxes! Far from being a strictly focused, formal and staid instructional event, the students enthusiastically munched on snacks, sang songs, and enjoyed some good laughs together. They also learned a great deal about their partner country's culture, and how technologies such as e-mail, the web, and video-conferencing can open up a wide range of possibilities for a global classroom.

The Family Treasures project involved undergraduate Canadian and year 7 Australian students in a collaborative inquiry project in which they selected and researched a family heirloom, historical artifact, object, or story, and learned more about its history by interviewing a grandparent or family member. Students also researched how the treasure represented a change from the past to the present. Students created multimedia representations about their family treasure, and then presented their results orally and visually with their classmates. Students from Canada and Australia collaborated on the selection of items, research strategies, and guidelines for multimedia production via email, web publishing and videoconferencing.

Getting Started

A first step in planning the global classroom projects was deciding what we wanted our students to gain from the on-going, on-line connections, and to let our learning goals drive planning and preparation for the cultural exchange. A general goal for both projects was to involve the two groups of students in an active, ongoing and online learning connection to learn about the other country's culture. We wanted students to experience the potential and possibilities for learning that are facilitated by technology and through international connections. Rather than just reading about how this might be done, we wanted to provide an opportunity for pre-service teachers, and year 11 and year 7 students to experience life in the Global Classroom first hand. As a result of advances in communication and information technologies, learners need no longer be bound by "same time, same place" access to education, and teaching responsibilities in K-12 and post-secondary can reach beyond traditional school and campus boundaries. Through participation in this online project, pre-service teachers and school students learned how the use of technology can add value to classes and enhance conventional classroom activities in an engaging way.

Specific learning outcomes for Year 1 Faculty of Education, Master of Teaching students included preparation for teaching careers through applied technology integration and participation in an online learning environment. Both Joanne and I seek to explore a range of methodologies to successfully prepare trainee teachers as facilitators of technology integrated learning across the curriculum. There is currently a large push in Alberta and Victoria to analyze how information and communications technology is effectively integrated in all levels of education, from kindergarten to grade 12, and on to college and university. For example, certified teachers in Alberta are to demonstrate that they understand the

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functions of traditional and electronic teaching/learning technologies, and that they know how to use and how to engage students in using these technologies to present and deliver content, communicate effectively with others, find and secure information, research, word process, manage information, and keep records. We believe that learning and applying collaboration, research and teaching and learning skills in the context of an on-line project will increase the education students' ability to articulate ways in which technology has influenced their own learning and in describing the ways they had seen technology play a role in others' teaching and learning. Further, pre-service teachers develop through active learning a thorough understanding of on-line learning environments, and thus will be able to discuss the implications of these environments for learning and teaching in their discipline/grade level.

Year 11 and year 7 Ararat Community College students are expected to do an oral presentation as part of their curricular requirements. What more exciting way to do this than by collaborating and talking with international students around the globe? The learner outcomes for Ararat students were multidisciplinary in nature, and included emphases on studies of society and environment (SOSE), increased knowledge of foreign culture, increased confidence with oral presentation (students who had been very nervous performed brilliantly), increased skills in global communication and tools, an understanding of the relevance of technology to enhance learning, and improved discussion and planning skills.

All three groups of students benefited from working on an authentic on-line project with experienced practitioners and mentors. Canadian and Australian students now better understand through shared experience how a variety of technology tools can be incorporated into teaching and learning for best practice. Through joint-planning and execution of the two phases of this collaborative, global classroom project, the teachers and students have developed methods for successful collaboration and establishment of an international network of learners. All of those involved in the project are developing a better understanding of how collaborative projects can be used to investigate social issues, multicultural connections, similarities and differences between cultures, and how information and communications technology can connect students around the world in meaningful and engaging projects with shared goals.

Managing Time Zones

The 17-hour time difference between Calgary, Alberta and Ararat, Victoria required us to examine several alternatives for getting together live. A complicating factor was coordinating the two class meeting times. For the first project, we chose a time that worked well for both classes, which required that the Calgary students come to campus in the evening. Faculty of Education students met in Calgary from 5:00 - 6:30 PM on Monday, October 23, and were connected live, via the teleconferencing facility in the Learning Commons, to students in Ararat, Australia, who participated in real time from their classroom from 10:00 - 11:30 AM on Tuesday October 24, 2000.

For the second project, the projected meeting times worked very well for both classes. The Canadian students were scheduled to meet in Calgary from 4:00 - 5:00 PM on Wednesday, April 4th, which translated (we thought!) into 9:00 - 10:00 am on Thursday, April 5th for the Australian students in Ararat. The Faculty of Education students were assembled and ready to go by 4:00, and when the technician dialed up the school in Ararat, we discovered it was 8:00 am, not 9:00 am. Hello Day Light Savings Time! Albertans had just switched all clocks ahead by one hour on April 1st, and those involved had failed to account for this in planning. All is well that ends well; even with the mess up with time zones, the videoconference between the Faculty of Education and Ararat Community College was a great success! The Calgary group dialed up Ararat at 5:00 PM Alberta time, which did translate into 9:00 am the next day for Ararat, and the two groups enjoyed a wonderful hour of games, activities and conversations with each other. The pre-service teachers were pleased with how they had managed a class that was half-way around the world.

Underlying Technologies

The University of Calgary is equipped with cutting-edge communications technology to facilitate video-conferencing in the Learning Technologies and Digital Media division of the Learning Commons. Education students met in Biological Sciences room 561, which is a fixed seating classroom which can accommodate 50 people and uses a PictureTel 4000 system with a 2-line ISDN call at 128 kilobits/second. This classroom features a touch sensitive computer control panel, a large-screen video monitor, three side monitors and the instantaneous power to switch to compressed video via Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) lines. Two 35 " monitors and two separately positioned video cameras provided exceptional viewing for all conference participants. The classroom provides full audio and video

interaction capability and users can view course material presented by the instructor either in hard copy format or directly from a computer. From their classroom at Ararat Community College, the Australian students linked to Calgary using two ISDN 64 k lines linked to a V-TEL unit, using SMARTVISION software. The college projects images through a data projector onto a large, high quality screen. It was possible to view the entire group, and smaller groups, in both classrooms. There was a very short delay in sound transfer, so our students would wait 1 second or so before replying to a question, or expecting a reply.

Calgary Students Hanging on Every Word

Linking to Learn

The first phase of the Global Classroom project involved students on both sides of the Pacific Ocean to discuss and select cultural artifacts, items and objects that they thought reflected their country's culture, identity and or history in some way. Having collected these items, the students assembled a mystery culture box that they sent to their counterparts on the other continent. The Australian Mystery Culture Box arrived a few weeks before the video-teleconference, so the Canadian student's curiosity level was very high by the time they finally got to open it! To stimulate curiosity, and build anticipation, Michele kept bringing the unopened box to class! The Canadian Mystery Culture Box arrived only the day before the video-teleconference, so there was some hand wringing by both instructors! The Canadians breathed a sigh of genuine relief when Joanne brought the box into the Australian classroom to be opened on air.
The second phase of the Global Classroom project started with the undergraduate students completing the Family Treasures project in December 2000 and January 2001 as part of their inquiry into technology integration. Each of the 25 pre-service teachers selected a family treasure (i.e., photo, object, story, recipe, item of clothing, etc.), and conducted research to discover the treasure's history. Students used a variety of research strategies, from face-to-face, telephone and e-mail interviews with family members, to library and Internet research. Students investigated their family's country of origin, international customs and beliefs, flags and crests, and stories about immigration to Canada. Students used digital cameras and a flatbed scanner to capture images of their treasure, and harvested images from the World Wide Web, to use in their multimedia presentations. Students investigated and reported on how the treasure represented a change from the past to the present. One student discussed how the gold for his wife's and his own wedding rings were passed down through generations of both families. Another student told about a coat that his grandfather used to wear, and another displayed her grandfather's teaching certificate and discussed how he taught in both of Canada's two official languages, French and English. Another student told the story of the hill that her family home was built upon, and another student told about her father's trip from the UK to Canada by researching the cruise ship's logs. Undergraduate students presented the results of their research both orally and visually using a digital projector to show their multimedia PowerPoint presentations to the rest of the class.
University of Calgary students learned a great deal about their history as individuals, each other as classmates, and about their diverse countries of origin. Students rediscovered the range and variety of

cultures that are represented in Canadian society, and developed a greater understanding of the multicultural milieu. The next stage of the project involved the undergraduate students applying what they had learned about conducting research using a range of sources, and how to present research findings using multimedia, to guiding the efforts of a year 7 class as they embarked on their own Family Treasures / Heritage project.

Joanne had experience with the Family Treasures / Heritage project through a project she had done with a previous year 7 class. She wanted to pursue a similar project with her current year 7 classes, 50 students in total! The two instructors generated a plan whereby the pre-service teachers would build and extend upon the Family Treasures project they had just completed, and develop strategies for mentoring and facilitating the research efforts of the year 7s.

E-mail Connections

It is important to establish some connections between students prior to the video-conference. The three groups of students from both countries used e-mail to introduce and describe their interests, and included some initial comments about their respective countries. Australian and Canadian students e-mailed back and forth with each other and then had the responsibility of introducing their email partners during the video-teleconference/live link-up.

It is important to develop back-up strategies in case the email connection does not work as planned. The instructors need to facilitate the email exchange between partners, and be prepared to offer alternative plans (such as forwarding the notes from students to the other instructor). A few students in the second project were unable to get emails back and forth to each other. This caused anxiety for students on both sides of the Atlantic. Though the university students sent email to all of their partners (verified through a copy to their instructor), some of the year 7s did not get their email for some reason, and became quite concerned. The year 7s were keen to see any that arrived, and Joanne noted that students who received and replied to a number of emails from their partners were keen to check for mail and prepared to put time into detailed replies. Joanne felt the personalized emails engaged the students more closely with their content than looking at the web sites other than the one created by their partner. The connections and relationships that were built between student partners contributed to their motivation to write, and to their engagement with the project, moreso that the information and advice published online. Several of Michele and Joanne's students have indicated that they want to continue corresponding with their partner student.

Planning the Agenda

The videoconferencing sessions were well planned in advance of the live link-up. Joanne and her students took on a leadership role for the first videoconference, and planned the agenda. For the 1.5 hour Mystery Culture Box exchange in October, a schedule and speaker order was drawn up in advance based upon e-mail partners, and e-mailed as an attached file from Australia to Canada. Suggestions and revisions based upon student input were e-mailed back to Australia, and the resulting agenda provided a framework for the session. Each student had a role and a goal for the session. In keeping with the mystery theme, Joanne and her students had clues for each item, and also asked the pre-service teachers to bring a load of fresh bread buttered and cut into quarters and some knifes, and to bring a large bowl and a jug of very hot water and a towel to the session. The Canadians had great fun trying to guess the items from the clues, and the reasons for bringing bread and hot water to the session. Preparation for the session included drafting a script and notes about the artifact that student's had included in the Culture Box, and learning "on-the-fly" how to operate the computer console to control the videoconference.

For the Family Treasures videoconference in April, the university students got some experience with instructional planning for a videoconference. While discussing what they might do during the videoconference, it was important for the class to revisit WHY they were meeting with the Ararat students in this way, and what of value we wanted to accomplish as a result. The pre-service teachers developed a list of reasons and a rationale for their videoconference with the Ararat students, which included: 1) to celebrate our successful international project, 2) to meet our international partners, 3) to determine whether we were of any help to the Grade 7s (i.e., email, web pages), 4) to maximize the videoconferencing medium (i.e., face-2-face, interactive versus that which can be done via web or email), 5) to take advantage of a unique opportunity to communicate with individuals from another culture, and 6) to build upon our previous videoconferencing experience. The university students were already organized into five collaborative groups, and each group designed a game or activity to pursue with their partner

year 7 students in Ararat. After much discussion and deliberation, the pre-service teachers prepared an agenda for the one hour link-up that included 5 different games and activities, along with time for introductions and concluding remarks. Some groups sent instructions to Joanne prior to the videoconference to help get the students prepared for the games.

Mystery Culture Box Artifacts

In-class group discussions and whole seminar planning sessions led to the selection of particular artifacts for the Mystery Culture Box. Students in both classrooms were responsible for preparing a two-minute script about their artifact. The Australian students chose items that reflected a light-hearted look at Australian culture. The items included: a beer can, an emu egg, emu feathers, a meat pie bag, a tomato sauce sachet, a football, eucalyptus oil, gum leaves and gum nuts, vegemite, sheep's wool, pictures of kangaroos and koalas, a Herald Sun newspaper and the words to Waltzing Matilda. After much discussion, debate and good natured joking about what might be the best way to represent themselves, the Faculty of Education students also selected items representing popular Canadian culture. A few students who had been to Australia shared their unique expertise in guiding selections. The cultural items the university students sent to Australia included maple syrup, cinnamon flavored hot tamales (candy), ketchup flavored potato chips, O'Henry chocolate bars, calendars of Canadian scenes, a number of CD's of music and film, an ice hockey puck, an "I am Canadian" cotton cap, a home-made multicultural cook book, and a brochure on the Rocky Mountains.

Linking Live

Mystery Culture Boxes on October 23/24! After waiting for weeks to find out what was in the box from Australia, University of Calgary students finally got to tear off the brown paper and look inside!! During the video-teleconference, students had the opportunity to introduce each other, describe the cultural significance of items and objects found in their respective culture boxes, and ask many questions. The speaker agenda and order kept the video-conference organized, and there was also a great deal of room for "teachable moments" and unscripted exchanges. Calgary students had an aromatherapy experience with eucalyptus oil and hot water - no clogged sinuses here!! Ararat students munched happily on the potato chips and chocolate bars, but preferred to pass on all things cinnamon - the flavor simply did not appeal to them. Calgary students were not very keen on vegemite & bread, but loved learning more about the boomerang, Australian beer, and gum leaves and nuts. The link-up also provided an opportunity for light-hearted joking and laughter and singing! Students from Ararat sang "Waltzing Matilda", and the Calgary students returned the favor by singing Canada's National Anthem in English. The instructors at both sites took digital photographs during and after the conference to post on the project web sites.

Australian Students with Canadian Cookbook

Students commented on both the similarities and differences between Australian and Canadian Culture. The Australian students were mystified by the hockey puck, and Canadian students were thrilled to learn that it is the male emu that incubates the eggs. Students made numerous connections about the shared history of multicultural migration, culinary variety, similar currency buying power, and unique aspects of respective publishing industries. Students from both countries had a number of questions that arose from the video-conference, and will have time to e-mail back and forth to share even more information about their country's culture.

Year 7 Ararat students and multiage, University of Calgary pre-service teacher students connected live, after initial glitches with the time zones, for a one hour conference that included a puzzle, a game of multicultural trivia tic tac toe, charades, a survivor game, and multicultural explorations. The pre-service teachers lead the session, managed transitions and introductions, and utilized the technology to pan the room and also to zoom in on the snowman they built for their Ararat partners! The year 7s loved the snowman! Joanne reported that the students were thoroughly pleased with the activities that were so cleverly planned to engaged them and make each of them feel special as a smaller group at a particular point. Having the group gave students with weaker communications skills support and confidence. The teacher of the class that followed Joanne's that day commented on how excited the year 7s were and how much they had enjoyed the videoconference lesson. Many kids have asked if they can continue corresponding with the university students.

World Wide Web Sites

UofC - http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dmjacobs/prosem/prosem_ararat.html
UofC - http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dmjacobs/prosem/ararat_treasures.html
Ararat - http://www.araratcc.vic.edu.au/users/web/CUSCU/culbox.htm
Both instructors have created and maintain extensive web-sites to support the Global Classroom project. The web sites supplement the video-conferencing session, and provide a shared electronic space for follow up activities initiated during the conference itself. Both web sites contain photographs and student feedback from the project, and a variety of other links to Canadian and Australian resources. Students on both sides of the Pacific were able to view digital photographs and comments on the session within hours of the conference via the web sites. The ability to read comments from each other, and view photographs of students holding or wearing the cultural artifacts, is both a privilege and an additional opportunity to get to know each other better.

Students Reflections on the Mystery Culture Box Event

The Australian and Canadian students were overwhelmingly positive about the video-teleconference and the Mystery Culture Box Exchange. Joanne and I both asked our students to provide feedback. University of Calgary students were asked: What did you learn about Australian culture? Technology? Video-conferencing? International projects? Year 11s from Ararat? What possible connections do you see with your own teaching?
One Calgary student commented: *I thought the videoconference on Monday was fantastic! I thought it was a terrific way to learn about Australian culture - I had no idea that an emu nest has 12-14 eggs or that the male emu sits on the eggs until they hatch! I thought that making the decongestant was a great activity. As well, asking you to bring the bread was good way to share the contents of the Australian culture box with our entire class. I especially enjoyed learning what the song Waltzing Matilda was about and hearing them sing it. I liked hearing the Australian accents and asking the questions that weren't planned, like what time is it? Are you wearing uniforms? Do you have a Chinese restaurant in Ararat?*
Another Calgary student commented: *Having been to Australia myself before, I knew about some of the things that they were telling us about, but I also learned a great deal - and I love to learn about other cultures. It was especially interesting to see how the Aussies presented THEMSELVES, rather than how the world sees them. I was fascinated with the Emu egg, as I had never seen one before and thought it was absolutely beautiful. I loved the designs on the boomerang that they included in the culture box - but I'm curious to know how it got damaged - has it been used before!? :) I was glad to see that they were relaxed enough to laugh along with us.*
Students from Ararat Community College were nervous leading up to the video-conference, and were well pleased by their performance. Some were nervous about the age difference. This group represented a wide range of abilities and confidence levels. Without exception, Year 11 Australian students performed beyond expectations in this project. The interest level was noted outside of time-tabled classes and filtered through to other students at our College. One student who is often truant from school attended complete with the necessary props for his presentation for the day. Students willingly gave up their recess break and commented how quickly the 1.5 hour session went by. Having linked primarily with schools in Japan where language may be a difficulty, one of the highlights of the session was sharing of humor between the two cultures. Joanne believes that the pre-service teachers brought into play some of their class management skills once they got over the hurdle of the technology. This helped involve the students and focus questions and the use of student's names served to involve them more directly in what was going on. In the words on one student: *I felt okay when I went up to talk and I was happy to*

hear that they liked the egg. The thing that went well during my speech was that I actually remembered my speech and I was able to add on a bit extra about the starvation part.

Family Treasures of the Past

As a result of our success with the international project in the Fall, Joanne and I designed the second collaborate project for our students during second semester. The Family Treasures & Heritage project builds and extends upon heritage projects that both of us had already done with our respective students. Our goal was to pair pre-service teachers with Year 7 students for mutual e-mentoring and research via email and a web-based exchange of knowledge.

We wanted to build and extend upon the "Family Treasures" project with our students, and give the pre-service teachers an opportunity to use their mentoring and facilitation expertise and knowledge via email and web exchange of knowledge (because they had already done a version of this project themselves). There are so many possible connections between the Family Treasures project, and what students learned about the diverse backgrounds that Canadians and Australians share as a result of their similar aboriginal and immigration/migration histories.

Jo had worked with past year 7 students on a Museum of Victoria's 'Home and Away' Project. Students used email to contact and interview new immigrants in Melbourne who were learning English. Students then brought in items from home that represented Australia's immigration past and spoke to family members to learn more about their ancestral history. Students contacted the Victoria Museum for additional advice and information about their history. Students used a digital scanner to capture images of their historical items, word processed their research data and findings, and emailed their work to classmates who built a website to showcase the projects.

University of Calgary students did a "Family Treasures of the Past" project, which is related to Alberta Learning's ICT Program of Studies, in December 2000 and January 2001. University of Calgary students shared some of what they learned with Year 7 students from Ararat, Victoria, to guide their research efforts as they embarked on their own Family Treasures Heritage project in February. The project officially began through email. The university students were in their classroom placements for an immersion week, and Michele sent them an email note to stimulate their interest in another collaborative project with Ararat Community College students.

The pre-service teachers had done several technology-related projects that required interviews, research strategies, teamwork and collaboration. The pre-service teachers were just learning to build web pages, and the link with Australia provided an authentic context for developing a web site for learning. The pre-service teachers were keen to support the year 7 students in their work with a family treasure (i.e., by suggesting interview strategies, resources on the web, potential resources in the community, and so on). The university students enjoyed the dozens of digital pictures that Jo published on the web showing the year 7 students and their family treasures.

What was particularly exciting for the pre-service teachers was the extension from their in-class work on the Family Treasures project, which they have done in PowerPoint, to posting this on the web for the purposes of sharing with and collaborating with the year 7 students. The pre-service teachers were asked to reconceptualize the family treasures task and consider how they would guide students through the same task -- not just in a future classroom, but right now with a year 7 class half-way around the world! The pre-service students reflected on the process they went through in researching their family treasure - how they chose an object or idea, the strategies they used to research the object's history, how to interview people, the resources that were most helpful, how they designed a multimedia presentation, and so on. Their notes, ideas and discussions became part of an initial shared web site, and eventually part of their own web sites.

Most of Joanne's year 7 students brought their own object from home, and the online photos from the Museum of Victoria of local scenes (1902 Football Team etc.) supplemented for the those students who didn't. The year 7s had a 'show and tell' about the objects, and Joanne took a digital photo of the item and the student and made these available from a website. Students from both classes, Year 7 and university, had access to the dozens of photos and could download these for presentations. Most of the year 7 students had used PowerPoint before and Joanne employed the best kids to help guide and facilitate the efforts of those who had not previous experience. Once the year 7s got started, they were very engaged with the task and personalizing their slides. Some very weak students, with recognized literacy problems, demonstrated more engagement in this activity than in any other this year. Following the suggestion of one of the Calgary students, Joanne tried using an 'Inspiration' brainstorm chart for kids, but found this

was not an effective starting point for most of them. To provide some structure and guidance for multimedia production, Joanne prepared a handout with a plan of how the slides could be organized. For example, slide two was to be an index, slide three had a picture of the object on it, and so on. This approach worked well for the students, and enabled them to focus the bulk of their attention on how to conduct research effectively using the Internet.

It is important to emphasize the value of involving an extended local community in global classroom projects. Parent Teacher Interview night fell within the period of the project, and Joanne found herself talking to parents about the objects their students brought in, the nature of the collaborative project with Canada, and how the parents could work with the children to conduct interviews at home about the objects. The conversations with parents strengthened the connection between school and home, and led to a very positive amount of data being collated by students whose parents attended the Parent Teacher Interview evening.

Crossing Time Zones with Instructional Support

The first exchange between the Canadian pre-service teachers and the year 7 students in Australia occurred in the form of a comprehensive web page, entitled "Researching and Reporting on Family Treasures" that the university students created as an entire class. In the context of a "how to" session on using a web editor, the pre-service teachers were asked to draw upon their experience of creating multimedia presentation of their own family treasure, and think about what advice they would give the younger students on getting started. While the web editor was open, and projected on the screen, the instructor typed in the advice and recommendations offered by each student. As a group, the students reorganized the individual recommendations into categories, such as selecting your treasure, research and planning, and constructing the presentation. The pre-service teachers suggested that it was important to spend some time thinking about which Family Treasure to research. Their advice included selecting an object that one is very curious about, or cares deeply about, considering something personal about the treasure that can provide a context for the presentation, and asking friends and/or fellow students for advice.

The pre-service teachers possessed a great deal of shared knowledge about planning and researching a Family Treasure, and offered a condensed version to get the year 7s started. Students were advised to start thinking of ways to storyboard and present ideas, perhaps even using concept mapping tools. Suggestions were made about organizing ideas ahead of time related to the desired end result. For example, did students want to create a serious presentation, a humorous one, a storytelling adventure, and so on. They advised the students to consider carefully whether the object offers a metaphor, symbol, or theme that you can build upon in the presentation, that connects the past and the future. Think about how one might make connections between the past and the present with relation to the Family Treasure. Dig deep for the history of the object. One can do this by: 1) interviewing your family, 2) searching the web for background information, some history, information about a significant topic related to your family treasure, 3) interviewing other experts, and so on. Use the Internet to research topics related to your Family Treasure, such as the country of origin, history of the item or related items and topics. The web is also good for gathering some pictures for your presentation.

The pre-service teachers used PowerPoint to construct presentations about their Family Treasures. They used scanned images of their Family Treasure, digital photographs, a range of pictures harvested from the World Wide Web (i.e., maps, flags, graphics, photographs), graphical programs, different backgrounds, audio they recorded themselves or borrowed from CDROMs or the web, and animations and effects! The pre-service teachers advised the younger students to be as unique and creative as possible, not to get carried away by animations and effects that would detract from the content, consider your audience, design the presentation to be appealing and interesting without putting every word on the screen, practice your presentation, and above all, keep it simple.

Once the "Researching and Reporting on Family Treasures" web page was posted on a public server, Michele sent a message to Joanne in Ararat, who sent this note in reply:

> *I can't tell you what a thrill it was to open that website and see our logos together again! I had the Year 7's last period today and some have already started to bring their stuff in. I have decided that they can do Powerpoint demonstations too for their work. All the suggestions were read out and it was perfect as each*

partner had a name beside the suggestion and you could see the kids swelling with pride at their partner being the one read out.. so sweet!

E-mail Introductions and Initial Advice

One of our goals was to provide a way for the pre-service teachers to guide their year 7 partner through how to investigate the object and its historical, national and familial significance. Jo and Michele happened to both have 25 students in their class, so university and year 7 students were paired up for email exchange. Students from both countries exchanged e-mail messages to introduce and describe themselves, and trade information on how to approach planning, research and construction of a project about a family treasure. Some students had trouble linking up via email, which is a possible bottleneck that instructors need to plan for, and put in place a contingency plan. The instructors have a reliable email link, and can forward email messages that don't appear to be getting through. The university students reflected carefully on the type of advice and suggestions to provide for the year 7 students, and prepared notes using word processing and a web page editor. The following are excerpts from notes sent back and forth across the ocean.

...I did the majority of my research by conducting interviews with my grandmother and her brother about their father. I looked through many old family pictures and I also read history books about the area of Western Canada in which my great-grandfather settled. To trace his journey from France to the United States to Canada, I referred to various maps. I also inquired into his journey via boat to the United States and via train to Canada. Most of my research was done by interviewing family members, looking at family pictures and reading records of family history.

...Because my original presentation was done using PowerPoint which I presented orally to my classmates, I did not include every word of my presentation on my slides. Instead, I was able to tell his story and the importance of his certificates as I spoke. Have you chosen a Family Treasure? Does it represent either your Irish or your English ancestry? I am interested to hear what you have chosen to research and how your project is going...

Authentic Web Design

University of Calgary students learned how to design and publish web pages as a group, and provided a great deal of support to one another as they created documents and posted them online. Drawing upon and exchanging their knowledge for purposes of instructing the year 7s provided an authentic reason for the pre-service teachers to build and publish a web site.

The students were interested, motivated and engaged with the idea of publishing web pages for an audience half a world away. One pre-service teacher, who already had experience with designing web pages, built an extensive web site with frames over one weekend, and modeled it for peers during seminar. Another university student, who was new to web page design, spent hours developing his web site, and extended the site to include personal photographs. Another student described how he was becoming quite addicted to web page design: *"Ever since yesterday's class I have been hooked on building my web page. Since I missed part of the class on uploading the page to the net I have took it upon myself to learn that. After playing around last night and today, I have finally got my web site up and running. Please check out my page and send me some feedback ASAP. Everything was working in both Internet Explorer and Netscape communicator"*. Three students decided to collaborate on a shared web site to capture their collective knowledge and advice about the Family Treasures project. Almost all of the students were able to construct and publish a web site in a very short time in order to communicate their ideas with the year 7s.

Springing Forward - Videoconference Link Up

Students from Australia and Canada connected in real time via video-teleconference on April 4/5th to conclude the project. The pre-service teachers were responsible for planning the one-hour

videoconference with the Ararat students. The excitement level was high as students proudly marched into the videoconferencing classroom with a snowman they build for their Aussie partners!! It was humbling to watch the university students lead and facilitate a successful videoconference session with the year 7s, and make the technology work well for an international exchange. Although they had structured plans for each of the games and activities, the pre-service teachers were also able to take advantage of teachable moments and improvise in response to student questions and unexpected reactions! For example, when they realized that their trivial pursuit questions about information to be found on their web pages were too difficult, they quickly changed gears and improvised with questions about Alberta and being Canadian to make the game a success for the year 7 students.

Concluding Remarks, and Next Steps

The two of us now have a great deal of experience team-teaching and co-planning at a distance to build upon for our collaborative projects in future years. Ideas that have come out of our conversations about future directions for our curriculum-based on-line projects include: 1) delegating coordinating roles in some of our Internet based projects for periods of time to pre-service teachers, 2) Joanne working as an on-line mentor with these coordinators in these roles to share her experience, 3) having pre-service teachers involve students in schools from their field placements in one of the projects in some way, and 4) focusing our collective evaluations of the above work on what learning benefits that students gain from these types of projects. Ideas that have arisen that are specific to video-conferencing include: 1) organizing a debate early in future years, 2) exploring other activities that would be suited to interactive work, and 3) arranging for University of Calgary Education students to join Ararat's other multi-national special events via e-mail, world wide web, and video-conferencing (i.e., computer-based).

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